

THE FAST



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## "THE FASTING CURE" ANSWERED.

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FROM the first era of medicine, which commenced with the dogmatic teachings of Hippocrates (B. C. 460-377) and of Galen (A. D. 130-200), through the empiric period, which began in the sixteenth century with the introduction of anatomy, learning from experience and deduction from metaphysical assumptions, to rather recent times, when the establishment of medicine upon a scientific basis was inaugurated, about twenty-four hundred years have elapsed. During this long period, history records the birth, temporary acceptance, and early dismissal of fads, fancies, cults, -isms, and -pathies for the treatment of the sick almost as numerous as the days gone by in the course of the twenty-four centuries. Of late years, the advancement of medicine on a scientific basis has rendered these fads somewhat fewer than in the mediate past, and in the last decade the writer can recall only 14 which have come and gone or are on the wane of their always short-lived popularity. Beginning with about five centuries ago, the stock of those which were particularly attractive or fetching to the lay mind ran out, and since then repetitions of old ones in new clothes have become the form. Not to be outdone, certain wiseacres then took this from one and that from another and seemingly built up a new one out of the old bricks. But therapeutics under the cloak of religion has of late years been the most popular form and the most readily successful, and Christ and the divine teachings have been forsaken in the interests of personal ambition or sacrificed to the self-inspirations of some leader temporarily working on the ignorance of the followers. In nothing so much as in this subject, with its fascination for the lay public, are self-aggrandizement and the frailty of the human being so plainly evident. From on high, the Divine Creator must view the panorama of the centuries that have been and the world of today with a full realization of the fact that, in this matter, some have sunk most deeply in illustration of the biblical phrase "the imagination

and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth," and this at the expense of suffering brothers and sisters about them.

Against these movements the medical profession, as a rule, has presented an indifferent front. This grandest and most useful of all bodies of public servants knows that the vast deal that is short-sighted and senseless in all of these fads, weighed against the aggregate of substantial good that they, as honest practitioners, distribute each day, means that the scales will turn in their favor when the brief period of hysteria is over. So they work justly and honestly on, to the best of their ability, taking no cognizance of these ill-considered movements, for the fact is there that the world goes on with the medical profession as one of its most useful assets, as if nothing had led some of its people astray in the mean time. In this light, it may be asked why I should answer Upton Sinclair's "The Fasting Cure," and enhance the danger of advertising the book so that it might do greater harm than it has already done. Ordinarily, I would not have done so, but of late I have seen some of the most pitiful objects of humanity, all women, who have been brought to the very brink of the grave by its insane teachings. One could hardly be human and stand silently by such a terrible unfolding as this, feel indifferent at the advice it contains, and conclude to let the rantings die the death inevitable to them without a word of protest on the way.

Some months ago a woman was referred to me by her physician for diagnosis and treatment. On her arrival, the nurse rushed into my office, upsetting the routine of consultations by appointment on that morning with the words "a very ill woman, who has been assisted into the hall by two men, one her physician, and she looks as if she was dying." I went out and saw a frail, cadaverous looking person unconscious on the chair. Her pulse was hardly perceptible in the cold, clammy wrists and stimulating restoratives were in order and used. After some minutes her senses returned, but she was unable to stand or raise her arms from sheer physical weakness. After being assisted into a conveyance she was taken home and put to bed. In consultation that afternoon I learned that she had just passed through nine days of fasting, two days of fruit juices, and was then on the fifth day of a régime comprising 5 quarts of milk a day—the cure for all disorders that human flesh is heir to, as recommended by Upton Sinclair. Upon physical examination, the case proved to be one of marked viscerai prolapse in which the history of a secretodynamic syndrome with attendant general debility had run over years of time, reducing her to a state of emaciation and chronic invalidism. At the end of some two years of more marked digestive distress than she had had before, and after she had eliminated from her diet practically all of the foods essential to body-tissue sustenance and vital functions, she had read Sinclair's articles in the *Contemporary Review* and *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, and fixedly carried out the directions given, thereby adding an acute debility upon a chronic one. When seen by me she was suffering from an acute dilatation of the stomach, brought on by abstinence from food, the organ practically filling her pelvis and being intolerant to nutriment of all kinds, even peptonized fluids. After some days of stimulation by hypodermic, saline infusions, and proctoclysis with albumin

water, and then high caloric feeding, her life was despaired of. Under steady nursing, however, she slowly recovered, having spent over six weeks in bed as a result of her experiment.

One morning, some weeks later, the secretary switched the hall 'phone to the one on my office desk—an occurrence which, during my office hours, always means an important matter of conversation. A man's voice at the other end of the line, some 20 miles out of Manhattan, begged me to start at once to meet the physician of his family in consultation, his sister being seriously ill. I felt that I could not possibly go at the time, and said so. The physician in charge of the case then spoke, imploring me further. Since the ease he detailed seemed more urgent than those on my appointment list at the time, I started off to it. When I arrived, I saw a middle-aged woman,—a reader in a Christian Scientist church, by the way,—who had quite reached the end of a year's downward course of pernicious anemia. The clinical and blood pictures in the ease were positive. The story unfolded was, therapeutics by Christian Science for the first seven months, a Bernarr MacFadden diet of nuts, beans, and other vegetarianisms for about two more, then a Salisbury diet of meat and water for some weeks longer, and the "fasting cure" for eleven days prior to the time I saw her. In the acute crises that these fads had helped to bring about, an occasional physician had been called, but his advice had never been welcome nor carried out. One of these physicians, however, in discussing the pathology of pernicious anemia with the patient's sister, had mentioned that a gastro-enteric atrophy was probably the primary cause of the disease. This information had been carried to the sick one, who, still being well enough to be about, figured that her rather steady diarrhea, abdominal distress, and flatulence, together with the general condition, made her a suitable person for this supposedly new, but nevertheless two-thousand-year-old, "fasting cure." On the fourth day of the fast she had no longer been able to leave her bed, but still possessed mentality. About the tenth day the latter had gone sufficiently so that some food could be given by mouth. But it was too late; she had sunk into complete coma on the morning they telephoned for me, and she soon joined the throng of "the great hereafter."

The next ease was one of mucous colitis with severe neurasthenia, in a hollow-eyed woman, emaciated to the bone, and with abdominal wall so attenuated that the intestinal peristalsis was visible from a distance through it. Chronically suffering, as these cases invariably do, she had passed from a stage of superalimentation, in which she was making progress toward health, to the "fasting cure," as a result of the kindness and consideration of a woman friend who brought to her the glad tidings of health to be secured by following the directions furnished by the discoverer of the new "cure." A copy of the magazine mentioned was given so that the rules could be carefully carried out. The legacy left from the nine days of fasting, the fruit juices and the taking of 5 quarts of fluid a day for about two weeks, was a complete break in the low degree of compensation in the digestive organs she had previously had, and altogether she was a pitiful object of humanity,—instead of possessing "that glorious feeling" in which "walking were such fun," which she was entitled to

have by virtue of having followed exactly and to its conclusion the same régime as had Upton Sinclair. Forced feeding, tonics, and abdominal support finally restored her.

The next case was one of chronic nephritis, in which a fair degree of health had been maintained until the "fasting cure" came along, the latter precipitating an acute exacerbation on the sixth day of the fast with marked ascites and edema of the ankles. After tapping, bandaging, rest in bed, general feeding, and diuretic measures, she made a slow return to her former condition in nine weeks' time.

Then came a patient who, as a result of taking sufficient amounts of food to keep her intestinal tract distended and in constant peristalsis, had done fairly well in overcoming a kink at the hepatic flexure of the colon. On the fifth day of fasting she developed acute obstruction from the total dynamic collapse of the gut, was operated upon for its relief, and died the third day after of sheer vital exhaustion from lack of food.

The sixth case was one of chronic excessive intestinal putrefaction of the indolic type, in which, as a result of a high caloric feeding low in protein, dietetic correction of constipation, and general measures, the patient had increased in weight until she felt she was beyond the fashionable standard of today—although no one else thought so with her. She, with a friend, undertook the "fasting cure" à la Sinclair. At the end of the first week the friend was taken to the hospital and operated upon for a ruptured pyosalpinx; she died of peritonitis on the fourth day afterward. My patient went on with the fast through seventeen days of total abstinence from food, some days of nuts and fruits, and twelve days of milk in large quantities. About a month after beginning with it, she developed a slight fever with corporal pains and mild general malaise. According to her deductions from Sinclair's writings, another fast was now indicated, which she engaged in for some days. Her illness then rapidly intensified, the fever became higher, the general condition alarming, and I was again called to see her. The change in the woman's appearance was so marked that I failed to recognize her as the person I had seen many times during the treatment conducted about a year before. A slight swelling in the upper cervical lymphatic glands of both sides and of others elsewhere in the body, together with the evidences of a marked anemia, suggested the making of a blood examination. The specimen obtained showed 2,150,000 erythrocytes of normal morphology, 51 per cent. of hemoglobin, and 155,000 leucocytes.—75 per cent. lymphocytes (mostly large) and 25 per cent. of all other forms. The diagnosis of acute lymphatic leukemia was evident, and she died in the fifth week thereafter. When she was discharged by me before, her blood-picture was normal and she was in robust health and happy until she became starved from fasting.

What I hope will be the last case I shall ever see of these unfortunates, who, the *New York Times* justly remarks, are "the victims of a shallow and unscrupulous sensationalist," was a case of neurasthenia gastraea in a college girl who had always been frail. Becoming ill and unable to continue her studies, she was sent home for care and attention, probably also because the

president felt that the college was too busy a place to bother with her, he knowing some facts which we did not. The secret of the severe anemia, debility, and lowered vitality she returned home with did not unfold itself until some days later, when, through a letter from the president, information was received, as a consequence of the talking of some of the other girls concerning their college mate's illness (this information being confirmed by the waitress of the table at which she sat), that the young woman had not eaten any food for five days. About as difficult as getting her to take food at the time was the wringing of a confession from her, in which she said she had read "The Fasting Cure," by Upton Sinclair, and had decided to try it. In a few days she recovered sufficiently to return to college, and then, upon thinking of the disastrous results in the cases noted, I decided to obtain a copy of this book and read it myself. The following are my experiences since then, and the deductions I have made, which, I desire to have it understood, are apart from my observations in the cases above mentioned and rest on a broader basis in the light of my knowledge and experience in medicine as applied to the actual contents of the book.

Early one afternoon my office nurse was sent out to purchase it. When I returned that evening she reported that she had gone to several department and book stores, but it was nowhere to be had. A few days later the *Evening Mail* of March 24, 1911, contained a review of the work, giving its title and the name of the author and publishers. I then decided to procure it myself, and a few days after, chancing to be in front of a large bookselling establishment on Twenty-third Street, I went in and asked for a copy. The saleswoman looked at me blankly, asked me to repeat the title, questioned several of the other saleswomen about it, and returned saying, "I will look it up." A large cloth-covered catalogue of all of the books recently published was produced, and nowhere, either under the title, the works of the author or the books issued by different publishers, could mention of it be found. "If it is to be had, we can get it for you," she said, so I left a deposit to show my good faith. Two or three days later I called again, and the book was there.

Soon after I opened the package, and the first thing I noted was a buff-colored paper wrapper, on which were two pictures of the author representing the "before" and "after treatment"—the time-honored allurement of the medicine faker. The "before" was the portrait of a young man of Oscar Wildean countenance, taken some years previous to the "after," in which the rotundity of physical frame that may come, even to a magazine writer, finds no explanation in the lapse of time between which the two were taken. In the "after" the low turned-down collar of years ago and the civilian coat of the "before" were exchanged for a soft, flannel shirt and sweater, and, instead of the stereotyped backing of the photograph gallery in the earlier picture, a tree some 3 feet or more in diameter was used to intensify the pugilistic metamorphosis from the "before" into the "after." Underneath the latter, in order that the prospective book buyer, casually looking over various books on show, might quickly be influenced to part with his or her money, the change from the "spiritual expression" to the "athletic figure" was further brought out in the

legend. After this first impression, repeated without words by a second appearance of the pictures in a frontispiece, so that if the cover happened to be discarded the suggestion would still be there, the author's wonderful findings were introduced in a preface, journalistic in style, to catch the unwary mind still more firmly.

The text begins with "Perfect Health! Have you any conception of what the phrase means?" and I felt that really the lay public stood but little chance against a bombshell opening like that. The rest of the 104 pages I will consider, for the sake of brevity, under the different headings given below, all the main ideas of the author, however, being presented. The testimonials of the cured "fasters" I will leave out of consideration altogether, for even the daily papers will no longer print such testimonials as these in their "ad" columns of advertised patent medicines,—thank heavens that this much has been accomplished toward enlightenment and progress in public health matters in our own country.

*Excuse for the book's existence.—*

"I received ten or twenty letters a day from people who had questions to ask or experiences to relate" and "the flood has not yet stopped." "My object in publishing this book is twofold: first, to have something to which I can refer people, so that I will not have to answer half a dozen 'fasting letters' every day for the rest of my life; and second, in the hope of attracting sufficient attention to the subject to interest some scientific men in making a real investigation of it." Plainly, the author has been losing time answering the letters, and time is money, so now, having the public interested in his direction, he takes advantage of it in royalties on a book on the subject,—commercialization of a duped public for selfish ends. The "attracting of scientific attention" is a further attempt in the same direction. This trait of his goes still further in the words "and there is not one of these people" (cases of different severe forms of illness) "whom I could not cure if I had him alone for a couple of weeks; no one of them who would not in the end be walking down the street as if it were such fun!" "The reader may think that my enthusiasm over the fasting cure is due to my imaginative temperament." It is more than that, it is good business, and of the kind that God, not I, must suffer from in its graveyard results. In explaining his subjective sensations during his first fast, he states: "Toward the end I began to find that in walking about I would grow tired in the legs, and, as I did not wish to lie in bed, I broke the fast after the twelfth day with some orange juice." This reminds one of the story of the farmer who had become so poor that the practice of urgent economy was necessary. Though eating regularly himself, he decided that eating was only a habit for dumb animals, and his hard-worked horse, whose appetite was always provokingly good at feeding time, was a proof of it. So he decided to demonstrate the great discovery for himself by not giving the horse any more food. Some days afterward a neighbor asked him how he made out, and this was his answer: "On the second day I found that the habit had taken such a hold on the animal that he kicked down the stalls, and smashed the barn. But I was determined. The

next day the habit began to be conquered, and he became quieter. On the fourth day the horse grew docile as a lamb, and the vicious habit had only a few feeble strands left. His change of temperament then became so marked that in the subsequent days I did not hesitate to walk around him while he was lying down,—a thing I never could do before without danger to myself." "Well," asked the neighbor, "how did you finally make out?" "Oh!" said the farmer deprecatingly, "you know what hard luck I been having. Just as I got the d—— horse cured of the habit, he died."

*Words of the faker.—*

"It is no pleasure for me to tell over the tale of my headaches or to discuss my unruly stomach." How often we have seen this statement in the testimonials of the patent-medicine vender or the charlatan's advertisement in the lay press! Does not the public still stand in need of the advice of the wisest of its leaders, to stop the employment of these mean business tricks? Then, again, "the fast is to me the key to eternal youth" (he should have said youth's eternity), "the secret of perfect and permanent health"; and, "it is enough for me to know that I am proof against all of the common affections which plague us, and against all the chronic troubles." One of his fasts will surely be his last and will cure him for all time. Further on appears this line "As one man, who wrote me a letter of enthusiastic gratitude, expresses it: 'I have spent over \$500 in the last ten years trying to get well on medicine. It costs me only 30 cents to use your method, and for that 30 cents I obtained relief a million-fold more beneficial than \$500 worth of medicine.'" How similar is the flavor of all of this to the claims of the medicine faker and charlatan! Of course, a good presentation must be made or the book will not sell; so why not the business methods that have worked so successfully before?

*A catcher after every fad, etc.—*

There are certain people in this world who are born faddists. One wears a monocle in public, or perhaps an inch-wide silk tape to his eye-glasses,—both of which are discarded when the wearer is alone. Another makes a specialty of fancy waistcoats, and the next of some peculiar mode of talking to attract the public. But there is a type, prevalent mainly among people of the so-called literary class, though common enough among others, which is mentally warped on the subject of health fads. It is largely among these persons that the cults, -isms, -pathics, etc., have their sway. Regarding these people it has been stated that they are the ones in whom "brains are cheap," but the great majority of them sail through life with their heads in the clouds and their feet rarely touching the earth. As a rule, they are as impractical a group of individuals for the substantial advance of the world's problems as can be seen, and as far as their own physical welfare is concerned they are lucky to have God's grace and the accommodations of nature to assist them. The author of "The Fasting Cure" is one of these, as the following shows: "I had discovered Horace Fletcher a couple of years before," and his "idea was very wonderful to me." He next went through the books of Metchnikoff and Chittenden and tried the diets advanced; then came to Dr. Salisbury's

"The Relation of Alimentation to Disease" after having been a vegetarian for three years. He now became a convert to beefsteaks and water (a fallacy long ago exposed and discarded by scientific physicians), and there was "one less vegetarian in the world." Koch's discovery of the tubercle bacillus seemed sufficient to him to put "Dr. Salisbury's theory out of court altogether, but as we physical culturists are inclined to suspect"—showing that he was the latter too. Upton Sinclair is, and probably always will be, a follower of anything and everything on the health-cure order.

Now it is the "fasting cure"; next year it is likely to be a new cure, or possibly some modification of another old one. The main thing is that the "cure fancy" is fixedly lodged in his mind, absolutely apart from any physical condition of his or other bodies calling for consideration. Health-fadditis is the diagnosis,—and the book is one of the main symptoms of this mental disorder. That he has this mental affection is no reason why it should be disseminated to infect the minds of others, and particularly of the sick, who grasp at straws, with which they sink, rather than planks, which would hold them up. With the healthy, these things do no harm and may even do some good—the healthy human body can stand and adapt itself to almost any strain. But the danger is, who is well enough? and may not some of their apparently insignificant subjective symptoms of disorder be really the symptoms of some grave inherent disease, independent of dietetic reasons? Throughout the book also are strong recommendations of the use of enemata "of cool water." The author does not state whether he uses some specially devised fountain syringe or nozzle tip. Possibly he forgot to mention it, and this is strange, as there are certain other faddists who are quite enthusiastic on this point.

*Egoism born of his lack of knowledge of medicine, etc.—*

"The fast is a cure for both emaciation and obesity." "I have done a good deal of experimenting myself, and have made some interesting discoveries" and "tell me, Dr. Woods Hutchinson, or other scoffers at the food faddists, don't you think that a case like this gives us some right to ask for a patient investigation of our claims? Or will you stand by your pill-boxes and your carving-knives and the rest of your paraphernalia, and compel us to cure all your patients in spite of you?" He details a case of exophthalmic goiter, which, according to his prognosis, "was slowly choking to death,"—a condition in this affection which no physician has ever seen. "I try to guide my conduct according to scientific knowledge," which he claims is universally deficient, so, "No one should begin to fast until he has read up on the subject." Thus the reader is made to understand that the book, which costs a dollar and gives its author a royalty, will do for this and also for the following,—"he should have with him some one who has already had the experience,"—the testimonials offered being the resource for any one so engaged. Then, again, "I would not advise a longer fast (twelve days) for any of the commoner ailments, such as stomach and intestinal trouble, headaches, constipation, and sore throat. Longer fasts, it seems to me, are for those who have really desperate ailments, such deeply rooted chronic diseases as Bright's disease, cirrhosis of the liver, rheumatism, and cancer." "People ask me in what diseases I recommended fasting. I

recommend it for all diseases of which I have ever heard, with the exception of one—tuberculosis." What unmitigated nonsense this is! It is so ridiculous that I cannot bring myself to answer it. "I know no two physicians who seem to agree in the diets they prescribe to consumptives, and I have never met two consumptives who follow the same regimen. The general idea seems to be to stuff as much food in your system as you possibly can, especially milk and raw eggs,"—when it is generally known among the best clinicians in medicine and sanatoria physicians that it is the fresh air, rest, and isolation that gets the patients relatively better, that the food is an unimportant factor so long as the patients take enough for their bodily needs, and that, in those with anorexia, milk and eggs, being fluid foods, which can thus be drunk when solids cannot be eaten, help to keep the food intake up to normal.

"Several people wrote me who were in the last stages of some desperate disease. Of course, they had always been consulting with physicians, and the physicians had told them that my article was 'pure nonsense,' and they would like to try to fast, but that they were too weak and too far gone to stand it. There is no greater delusion than that a person needs strength to fast. The weaker you are from disease, the more certain it is that you need to fast,—if you fast under these circumstances, you will not grow weaker, but stronger. The fast is Nature's remedy for all diseases—when you feel sick, fast." What a cheap bid for notoriety and commercial advantage, and what better manifestation of the faker or faddist born in ignorance of the subject! We physicians going from one sick-bed to another soon learn one thing from clinical experience, and that is, that whatever the disease or whoever the patient, when, by whatever means employed, nutrition by foods is or can be kept up, the chances of improvement are enhanced according to the quantity of food intake. But when, for whatever reason, this is not being done we immediately figure the intensity of the disease and the usual duration of the illness against the balance of vital and reserve energy the person enters the illness with, helped out by the amount of the food intake during the period. We know well that in pneumonia, typhoid fever, etc., more people have been lost by insufficient intake of food during their illness than for any other reason, and instruct our nurses in their training schools accordingly. To what is the debility, emaciation, anemia, and devitality of convalescence from disease due if it is not to the ravages of the disease on the tissues, aided by the starvation consequent upon the small intake of food or its imperfect utilization by the body during its acute course? In selecting nurses to care for such cases we strive to secure the services of those who are skillful in devising and preparing food in such ways as will circumvent the loss of appetite and the shortage in its utilization during the disease. We know it as a practical fact that by so doing the prognosis is rendered better, the dangers of complications fewer, and the convalescence shorter. The histories of over seventy-five thousand cases of abdominal disorders which I have observed professionally, and which are on file at my command, show that subnutrition is a common factor in the large majority, a subnutrition which is the primary cause of their remaining ill and getting worse or of preventing their complete recovery. In most of those in which toxemia of intestinal

origin is present this is not so much secondary to excessive food intake as it is to the intake of improper food for the condition, functional, bacterial, organic, or malignant, as the case may be. In the first three of these, fortunate is the stomach specialist or internist who, recognizing the cause, corrects it by measures which include superalimentation in the treatment, and lucky is the patient who has such a physician to guide him. Fasting is right enough for those who are not actually ill, but, as a general rule, for the patients I see it is suicidal, for in them dieting according to their condition with sufficient food intake is called for, and not fasting.

*Tirade on physicians.—*

Of course, one presenting such a subject as this must appear knowing and strong as a teacher-prophet. If it is good business to denounce those in the field which the author of this book seeks to cover, why not be thorough about it and ridicule the entire profession as a body? To claim that there is no good in any of their endeavors might result in their being hamstrung the more quickly and surely in the public's estimation. Thus the statements are to be as radical as possible, for the book must be sold at all hazards. Therefore these words: "We have some one hundred and forty thousand regularly graduated medical men in this country, and they are all of them presumably anxious to cure disease," yet, "out of six or eight hundred letters that I have received, just two, as far as I can remember, were from physicians; and out of the hundreds of newspaper clippings which I have received, not a single one was from any sort of medical journal. There was one physician, in an out-of-the-way town in Arkansas, who was really interested—one single mind, among all the hundred and forty thousand, open to a new truth." Even this one poor, deluded brother, if he is the proper sort of a practitioner, must have changed his mind when he had tried the "cure" in his practice. If he has not, I beg to offer the following before he does, so that he may not plead that he had not been warned in time. "Sometimes it seems to me that we have no right to expect their help at all, and that we never will receive it. For we are asking them to destroy themselves, economically speaking—and it must be difficult for a hard-worked and not very highly paid physician to contemplate the triumph of an idea which would leave no place for him in civilization."

Now the reason for the existence of the million or more regular practising physicians throughout this world is that the people need them,—need them every moment in the day and night. This has been true for centuries; it is more so today than ever before, and will be still more true in all times to come. As it is human for one to know the value of a service rendered, so each one of them realizes daily the help he gives to the people. If the reader will think for a moment of the value of the services physicians and surgeons have rendered to the small group of people about him or her, then multiply this by all of the other people in the world, and this by the number of those in times gone by, the value of physicians' work and the correct response to the above ungrateful words will be evident. There is much more in his book along the same lines, words expressing selfish desires and ignorance so flagrant that they need not be pointed out to any one.

A few centuries ago the physician was in disrepute, and surgery was a menial vocation. Today the medical man belongs to a privileged calling of the greatest importance, and is nowhere excluded. The people, State, and government are giving him more and more power, so that now he can turn a city into a desert or a desert into a city, keep any ship out of port, stop mail steamers in midocean when he operates, bear official rank in the army and navy, he has made war in the tropics possible, and has rendered practicable the building of the Panama Canal. Almost daily from the ranks of the profession are men giving up their lives, happiness, and all for the conquest of disease. As medical men, we are reaping a reward of recognition which neither moth nor rust nor man can steal the credit for. Of course, the naturopath, health and physical culturist, dietetic and other therapeutic faddist, religionist and otherwise, will continue to malign, ridicule, and lie about us, but all this works for good, for it makes our own recognition all the more rapid and certain, and the day will soon come in our country when the government and the sentiment of the people supporting it will be fully aware that the health of the public is the country's greatest asset, and close to the President's chair the medical profession will dictate in power what and what not the body-politic must do in health measures. When that happy time comes, as it surely must with as progressive and understanding a people as our own, the nation will be blessed indeed, for then inventors of fads, cults, -isms, or -pathies will be no longer allowed for selfish ends or purposes of notoriety to take advantage of the unfortunate sick about them.

*Diagnosis of Sinclair's illness.—*

From what the author details in his book of the symptomatology of his condition, the diagnosis of chronic excessive putrefaction in the intestine of the indolic form is apparent at a glance. He was the child, loosely brought up in a dietetic way, of a family in which a child with eating whims would have full sway and ready gratification. Although he probably developed the condition in those days, the food in his family being of good quality and in abundance he "was an active and fairly healthy boy" until the twentieth year of his life. The seeds of the condition having been sown, he wrote his first novel, "working sixteen or eighteen hours a day for several months, camping out, and living mostly out of a frying pan. At the end I found that I was seriously troubled with dyspepsia; and it was worse the next year, after the second book." To the trained clinician it is perfectly evident that the mental strain, with its depressing effects on the digestive system, due to the writing of two novels at the break-health pace which he set for himself, with the products of the frying-pan added, broke the frail pole under the hollow tent, and down came his low degree of physical and nervous energy, leaving him a frank dyspeptic. After that, the history continues, "I worked under heavy pressure all the time, and ate very irregularly, and ate unwholesome food." Then there begins a description of various minor symptoms, all indicative of low general body resistance and toxemia, with some due directly to the latter condition. He then developed a continuous summer sneezing, "a kind of hay fever," and this, with other symptoms, gave evidence of a neurasthenia. The diagnosis at this time was,

chronic excessive putrefaction in the intestine of the indolie form begun in childhood, and the low stock of vital, nervous, and reserve energy he possessed previous to the novel-writing days, broken down further by his life thereafter, finally led to the development of his temperamental neurosis into a marked neurasthenia.

*The reasons for his improvement.—*

Against the allegation that fasting was the cause of his improvement, I wish to present the following statement of his: "I went out of doors and lay in the sun all day, reading." Here were rest with fresh air and mental diversion to help him recuperate. When he broke the fast, he "took a glassful of warm milk every hour the first day, every three-quarters of an hour the next day, and finally every half-hour—or eight quarts a day." From clinical experience, long before the reason therefor was understood, we physicians had learned that fresh milk was the food *par excellence* for the ill. Today we know the reason of the value of an exclusive milk diet, viz., that because of the ready digestibility of milk it is practically all absorbed before reaching the colon, thus leaving but little chance for the organisms in the colon to act upon it; in a word, those on a milk diet harbor less bacteria in the intestines than do those on a mixed diet, and this is the basis of the improvement in cases on the Metchnikoff milk diet (not because of the lactic acid or the bacteria contained in it). The ridiculous part of this is that he claims to have discovered the milk diet. If Sinclair, instead of fasting first, had from a mixed diet suddenly changed to a milk diet of about three quarts a day and rested in the sun, with mental diversions, he would have accomplished the same results in the space of time he mentions, and, just as truly, he would not have run the danger of an acute dilatation of the stomach from the large amounts of milk he took. Taking every three-quarters of an hour in glassfuls milk which takes three hours to leave the stomach, almost a quart must have been in his stomach at every minute of the day—a ridiculous and dangerous amount, as one of my cases proved it to be.

Added to these facts comes physical exercise, a most wholesome thing for one afflicted with his disorder to engage in. "Whenever I had a spare minute or two I would begin to stand on my head, or to 'chin' myself, or do some other 'stunt.'" Then again, he took daily enemata of water for his constipation, thus clearing out the bacteria and putrefying foods in his colon and thereby helping his local and general condition; but, like the other good measures employed in his cure, they are not given much credit for his improvement in health.

*How he should have been treated.—*

An accurate diagnosis of his condition being made from the history and clinical symptoms, with a careful study of what and how much food he was taking, an exhaustive quantitative chemical examination of the urine and an investigation of the stools, as to their quantity, the character of food and detritus, and the amounts and character of the contained bacteria, would have suggested the proper diet for him and how much of each of the foods he should take, the hygienic measures to be instituted, and the proper vaccine to raise

his opsonic index against the infecting organisms at work in his intestine. In his ease, as well as in practically all of the same conditions as they are being handled by practitioners today, deep enough scientific study has not been given to the phenomena present. When we know exactly what materials are going into these people in the way of food and drink, and how these are coming out, their utilization, their losses, and their perversions, most valuable clinical data for the basis of treatment are obtained. Sulphate partitions of the urine, estimations of albumin-loss and the percentages and differential counts of bacteria of the stools, all made under known conditions of diet, are most essential for both diagnosis and treatment, yet are seldom carried out. Mild cases can be diagnosed by inference or exclusion, and simple measures of treatment answer for the majority of these, but by far the larger proportion are chronic in nature, and these cannot be cured unless they are studied most scientifically and exhaustively. In these, in addition to the diet and other measures, the working up of the body resistance against the infection by vaccine methods forms the most valuable point of treatment.

Such is my answer to the "fasting cure" for the treatment of chronic excessive putrefaction in the intestine, as well as for all other affections of man, according to Sinclair's claims. For the book itself, enough has been stated to show that no writer, even of the excused magazine and sensational type, has any right to take advantage of the sick public just because he possesses the faculty of writing snappily and interestingly. These gifted people are able to write on any subject on which their knowledge is limited in a way that carries conviction to the average mind. Sinclair is of this group, and his selfish ambition, his ignorance of the subject, and his deductions and preaching on the physical wrongs of man should not mislead people to try the fad he has written on. To his elderly relative, who did not take much stock in his eccentricities and who said to him, "I know you'll get into trouble, if you don't stop advising people to do such things," I wish to say that he has already done so. His ideas, not because of the fasting, but because of the other measures he less strenuously advocates, may help a few people; but think of the poor victims reported, who number only a very few among the many there must have been and no doubt will be! There is one personal consolation that comes to me in closing my answer, and that is that even a large bookseller did not know that such a book existed, and had some slight difficulty in getting it. There is one step farther, and that is that the author and the publishers should not supply it to anyone asking for it, not even for money. Upton Sinclair would do less harm by adhering to the construction of such books as "The Jungle," "The Moneychangers," and others, for in his last theme he has become more than a public nuisance,—he is a destroyer of human life in addition.

